

02/14/00



jc674 U.S. PTO

02-15-00

Case Docket No. PHF 99,513

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THE COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS, Washington, D.C. 20231

Enclosed for filing is the patent application of Inventor(s):
JEAN GOBERT

For: FILTERING A COLLECTION OF SAMPLES

ENCLOSED ARE:

- ☒ Associate Power of Attorney;
☐ Information Disclosure Statement, Form PTO-1449 and copies of documents listed therein;
☒ Preliminary Amendment;
☒ Specification (9 Pages of Specification, Claims, & Abstract);
☒ Declaration and Power of Attorney:
 (1 Page of a [] fully executed ☒ unsigned Declaration);
☒ Drawing (3 sheets of [] informal ☒ formal sheets);
☒ Certified copy of EUROPEAN application Serial No. 99400475.2;
☒ Other: AUTHORIZATION PURSUANT TO 37 CFR 1.136(a)(3);
☒ Other: CITATION OF RELATED CASES;
☐ Assignment to

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09/503967



02/14/00

FEE COMPUTATION

CLAIMS AS FILED				
FOR	NUMBER FILED	NUMBER EXTRA	RATE	BASIC FEE - 760.00
Total Claims	5 - 20 =	0	X \$18 =	0.00
Independent Claims	2 - 3 =	0	X \$78 =	0.00
Multiple Dependent Claims, if any			\$260 =	0.00
TOTAL FILING FEE			=	\$760.00

Please charge Deposit Account No. 14-1270 in the amount of the total filing fee indicated above, plus any deficiencies. The Commissioner is also hereby authorized to charge any other fees which may be required, except the issue fee, or credit any overpayment to Account No. 14-1270.

[] Amend the specification by inserting before the first line the sentence: --This is a continuation-in-part of application Serial No. , filed .--.

CERTIFICATE OF EXPRESS MAILING

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 hereby certify that this paper and/or fee is being deposited with the United States Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service under 37 C.F.R. 1.10 on the date indicated above and is addressed to the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231.

Typed Name

Signature

Russell Gross
 Russell Gross, Reg. 40,007
 Attorney
 (914) 333-9631
 U.S. Philips Corporation
 580 White Plains Road
 Tarrytown, New York 10591
 MR10GRDO.SWO

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of

Atty. Docket

JEAN GOBERT

PHF 99,513

Filed: CONCURRENTLY

FILTERING A COLLECTION OF SAMPLES

Honorable Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Sir:

Prior to calculation of the filing fee and examination,
please amend the above-identified application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1. (amended) A method of filtering a collection
(COL) of samples (Si), [characterized in that] wherein the
method comprises the steps of:

- distinguishing (DIS) between valid samples (Si+) and non-valid samples (Si-) on the basis of auxiliary data (AUX); and
- deriving (DER) filtered samples (So), which are associated with the valid samples (Si+), exclusively on the basis of the valid samples (Si+).

Claim 2. (amended) A method of filtering as claimed in
claim 1, [characterized in that] wherein the method
comprises the step of:

- deriving a filtered sample from a set of filter input values which is fixed in size; each filter input

value being associated with a specific sample such that, if the sample is valid, the value of the sample is taken as the filter input value whereas, if the sample is not valid, a padding value is taken as the filter input value, the padding value being derived from at least one valid sample.

Claim 3. (amended) A method of filtering as claimed in claim 1, [characterized in that] wherein the method comprises the steps of:

- forming a cluster of samples;
- calculating a padding value on the basis of valid samples in the cluster;
- forming a set of filter values by taking, for each valid sample, the value of that sample and by taking the padding value for each non-valid sample;
- deriving a filtered sample from the cluster of filter input values.

Claim 4. (amended) A filter arrangement (FAR) for filtering a collection of samples (S_i), [characterized in that] wherein the filter arrangement comprises:

- an input circuit for distinguishing between valid samples (S_i^+) and non-valid samples (S_i^-) on the basis of auxiliary data (AUX); and
- a filtering circuit for deriving filtered samples (S_o), which are associated with the valid samples (S_i^+), exclusively on the basis of the valid samples (S_i^+).

Claim 5. (amended) A computer program product for a filter arrangement, the computer program product [being characterized in that it] comprises a set of instructions which, when loaded into the filter arrangement, causes the filter arrangement to carry out the method as claimed in claim 1.

IN THE ABSTRACT

Please delete the abstract in its entirety and replace
with the following:

20250927090500

REMARKS

The claims have been amended to correct grammar. The abstract has been amended to conform to U.S. practice.

Entry of this amendment is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

By 
Russell Gross, Reg. 40,007
Attorney
(914) 333-9631

09502957 021400

Filtering a collection of samples.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates to filtering a collection of samples. Such filtering may be applied, for example, in image processing prior to an image-processing operation like up-sampling, down-sampling or warping.

BACKGROUND ART

WO-A-98/06064 (attorneys' docket no. PHB 34.096) describes post-processing of a computer-generated image of a three-dimensional object for display as a pixel image. A focus depth is specified either by the user or from within the system for each image frame. The image pixels are grouped in non-overlapping blocks of adjoining image pixels with a single respective depth value pre-specified or calculated at run-time for each block. Each block is extracted in turn from the image, and the pixels within a block are filtered with a common set of filter coefficients. Padding may be applied to fill areas where a full filter kernel cannot be formed. An example of padding is repeating pixel edge values or "wrapping round" values from the opposite edge of the block in order to provide sufficient values of the right general order to construct a filter kernel centered on these pixels in the boundary area.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the invention that a wide variety of collections of samples can be satisfactorily filtered.

The invention takes the following aspects into consideration. Filtering a collection of samples usually implies that a cluster of samples is formed for each sample, the cluster comprising the sample itself and neighboring samples. A filtered sample is derived from the cluster, for example, by applying a certain function to the cluster of samples. The filtered sample thus obtained is associated with the sample for which the cluster was formed.

For the purpose of filtering, it is convenient to structure a collection of samples in such way that clusters of samples can easily be formed. For example, let it be assumed that a collection of samples represents a two-dimensional image. It is then convenient to structure the collection of samples as a matrix.

Let it be assumed that a structured collection of samples represents a multi-dimensional entity having an irregular shape. This implies that some samples are valid because they belong to the entity, whereas other samples are not valid because they do not belong to the entity. For example, an image may be a composition of various arbitrarily shaped objects. Let it be assumed that the image is represented by a collection of samples which is structured as a matrix. The collection of samples constitutes, as it were, a rectangular bounding box which contains the image. Some samples will belong to the image and will thus be valid, whereas other samples will not belong to the image and will thus not be valid.

The following problem may occur in filtering a structured collection of samples which represents a multi-dimensional entity having an irregular shape. Some filtered samples will be derived from clusters comprising one or more samples which are valid because they belong to the entity, and one or more samples which are not valid because they do not belong to the entity. That is, some filtered samples will, in effect, be mixtures of valid and non-valid samples. The filtered samples will thus represent the entity with a certain degree of distortion. This distortion will be relatively severe if non-valid samples substantially differ in value from valid samples.

In accordance with the invention, a distinction between valid samples and non-valid samples is made on the basis of auxiliary data. Filtered samples, which are associated with the valid samples, are derived exclusively on the basis of the valid samples.

Accordingly, in the invention, it is prevented that the filtered samples, which are associated with the valid samples, are affected by a non-valid sample. Thus, supposing that the collection of samples represents an entity with samples belonging to the entity and samples not belonging to the entity, it can be prevented that filtering the collection of samples entails a distortion of the entity. Consequently, the invention allows a satisfactory result in terms of distortion without this requiring that all samples are valid or that any non-valid sample does not substantially differ in value from the valid samples. Thus, the invention allows satisfactory filtering of a wide variety of collections of samples.

The invention and additional features, which may be optionally used to implement the invention to advantage, are apparent from and will be elucidated with reference to the drawings described hereinafter.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a conceptual diagram illustrating basic features of the invention as claimed in claim 1;

Fig. 2 is a block diagram illustrating an example of an MPEG-4 image processing arrangement in accordance with the invention; and

Fig 3 is a conceptual diagram illustrating how a stream of image samples can be formed in the MPEG-4 image-processing arrangement illustrated in Fig. 2.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

First, some remarks will be made on the use of reference signs. Similar entities are denoted by an identical letter code throughout the drawings. Various similar entities may be shown in a single drawing. In that case, a numeral is added to the letter code so as to distinguish similar entities from each other. The numeral will be between parentheses if the number of similar entities is a running parameter. In the description and the claims, any numeral in a reference sign may be omitted if this is appropriate.

Fig. 1 illustrates basic features of the invention. A collection COL of samples Si is filtered in the following manner. A distinction DIS is made between valid samples Si+ and non-valid samples Si- on the basis of auxiliary data AUX. Filtered samples So, which are associated with the valid samples Si+, are derived DER exclusively on the basis of the valid samples Si+.

There are various manners in which the filtered samples that are associated with the valid samples may be exclusively derived from the valid samples. For example, let it be assumed that a cluster of samples is formed so as to derive a filtered sample. It is then possible to make a weighed combination of the valid samples in the cluster only, the weighing factors depending on the number of valid samples in the cluster. This may be realized by means of a filter of variable length, with a different set of filter coefficients for each length. However, such a filter is generally relatively costly. It is therefore preferable to use a filter of fixed length.

A fixed-length filter can be used in the following embodiment. A filtered sample is derived from a set of filter input values which is fixed in size. Each filter input value is associated with a specific sample. If the sample is valid, the value of the sample is taken as the filter input value. If the sample is not valid, a padding value is taken as the filter input value. The padding value is derived from at least one valid sample. For example, the padding value could be the mean value of all valid samples. However, such a calculation is generally time-consuming and requires a relatively large memory.

A relatively fast padding value calculation can be made as follows. A cluster of samples is formed. A padding value is calculated on the basis of valid samples in the cluster. A set of filter values is formed by taking, for each valid sample, the value of that sample and by taking the padding value for each non-valid sample. A filtered sample is derived from the cluster of filter input values.

The features illustrated in Fig. 1 may be applied, for example, to process image data which is composed of texture data and shape data. Such a composition will be used in a video coding standard commonly referred to as MPEG-4. In MPEG-4, the texture data is formed by one or more blocks of image samples. The shape data is formed by a bitmap in which each bit is associated with a specific image sample. The value of the bit indicates whether or not the image sample concerned belongs to an object, or a composition of objects, which the image data represents. The bits of the bitmap, which constitutes the shape data, will hereinafter be referred to as shape bits.

Fig. 2 illustrates an MPEG-4 image-processing arrangement which recaptures the features illustrated in Fig. 1. The image-processing arrangement comprises a receiving section INP, a filter arrangement FAR and an image processor PROC. In more detail, the filter arrangement FAR comprises a sample memory MEMSMPL, a shape memory MEMSHP, a padding-value calculator PVC, a multiplexer MUX and a filter FIL.

The image-processing arrangement operates as follows. The receiving section INP receives image data ID. The image data ID contains one or more blocks of image samples representing an object or a composition of objects. The image data ID further contains a bitmap associated with the one or more blocks of image samples. The receiving section INP provides a stream of image samples ISS and a stream of shape bits SBS. The streams are synchronized. That is, when the input section provides an image sample, it simultaneously provides the shape bit associated with that image sample.

Fig. 3 illustrates how the stream of image samples ISS is formed. Since the stream of shape bits SBS is synchronous with the stream of image samples ISS, both have the same format. Fig. 3 shows a matrix composed of true image samples PX and filler image samples PF. The true image samples PX originate from the image data ID. The filler image samples PF have been added to the true image samples in order that the filter arrangement FAR provides a number of filtered image samples corresponding to the number of image samples contained in the input data ID. The streams of image samples ISS is formed by scanning, as it were, each row from the matrix concerned from the left to the right. The scanning starts at the upper row and ends at the bottom row. With each filler image sample

PF, the receiving section INP simultaneously provides a shape bit indicating that the filler image sample PF is not valid.

The filter arrangement FAR successively forms different clusters of image samples and clusters of associated shape bits, and derives a filtered image sample from each cluster of image samples. The sample memory MEMSMPL and the shape memory MEMSHP are first-in-first-out (FIFO) memories which receive the stream of image samples ISS and the stream of shape bits SBS, respectively. A new cluster of image samples is thus formed when a subsequent image sample in the stream of image samples ISS is written into the sample memory MEMSMPL, while deleting the image sample which has been first written into the sample memory MEMSMPL. Similarly, a new cluster of shape bits is formed when a subsequent shape bit in the stream of shape bits SBS is written into the shape memory MEMSHP, while deleting the shape bit which has been first written into the sample memory MEMSHP.

The filter arrangement FAR derives a filtered image sample from a cluster of image samples contained in the sample memory MEMSMPL. It may happen that the cluster does not contain any image sample which is valid. In that particular case, the filter arrangement FAR may provide a filtered image sample which is, for example, a do-not-care value or a non-valid sample in the cluster. It will hereinafter be assumed that there is at least one valid sample in the cluster of image samples.

The padding-value calculator PVC calculates a padding value PV on the basis of valid image pixels contained in the cluster. The padding-value calculator PVC can determine whether an image sample is valid or not by means of the shape bits contained in the shape memory MEMSHP.

There are various different manners in which the padding-value calculator PVC may derive the padding value PV from the valid image samples. For example, the padding value may be the arithmetic mean value of all valid image samples in a cluster. As another example, the padding value PV may be an approximated arithmetic mean value being the sum of all valid samples divided by a value which is the integer to the power of two nearest to the number of valid samples. The calculation of this approximated arithmetic mean value requires one or more addition and bit-shift operations only. Such operations can be carried out relatively quickly and with relatively simple hardware. As yet another example, the padding value PV may be the median value of all valid samples in the cluster. In that case, the padding-value calculator may be implemented using comparators and multiplexers only.

The multiplexer MUX successively reads the shape bits contained in the shape memory MEMSHP. If a shape bit indicates that the image sample with which it is associated is valid, the image sample is a true image sample PX. In that case, the multiplexer MUX supplies the value of the image sample concerned to the filter FIL. If, however, a shape bit indicates that the image sample with which it is associated is not valid, the image sample is a filler image sample PF. In that case, the multiplexer MUX supplies the padding value PV to the filter FIL.

The filter FIL makes a weighed combination of the values it receives from the multiplexer MUX. The weighed combination of these values constitutes a filtered image sample. The weighing factors are filter coefficients. There is a specific filter coefficient for each position in a cluster.

The filter arrangement FIL carries out the above-described operations for each different cluster of image samples and associated shape bits. Accordingly, a collection of filtered image samples will be obtained. The collection of filtered image samples constitutes the filtered image data FID.

The image processor PROC processes the filtered image data so as to obtain processed image data. The image processor PROC may carry out an image-processing operation like, for example, up-sampling, down-sampling or warping.

The drawings and their description hereinbefore illustrate rather than limit the invention. It will be evident that there are numerous alternatives which fall within the scope of the appended claims. In this respect, the following closing remarks are made.

There are numerous ways of physically spreading functions or functional elements over various units. In this respect, the drawings are very diagrammatic, each representing only one possible embodiment of the invention. Thus, although a drawing shows different functional elements as different blocks, this by no means excludes that some, or all, functional elements may be implemented as a single physical unit.

There are numerous manners of forming clusters of image samples. Fig. 2 only illustrates one possible implementation in which clusters of image samples are formed by supplying a stream of image samples to a FIFO memory. An other possible implementation is to store all image samples, and the associated bitmap, in accordance with a certain format. An address generator successively generates different groups of addresses. The image samples stored under a group of addresses forms a cluster from which a filtered image sample can be derived in accordance with the basic principle illustrated in Fig. 1.

Any reference sign in a claim should not be construed as limiting the claim.

CLAIMS:

1. A method of filtering a collection (COL) of samples (S_i), characterized in that the method comprises the steps of:

- distinguishing (DIS) between valid samples (S_i^+) and non-valid samples (S_i^-) on the basis of auxiliary data (AUX); and

5 - deriving (DER) filtered samples (S_o), which are associated with the valid samples (S_i^+), exclusively on the basis of the valid samples (S_i^+).

2. A method of filtering as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the method comprises the step of:

- deriving a filtered sample from a set of filter input values which is fixed in size; each filter input value being associated with a specific sample such that, if the sample is valid, the value of the sample is taken as the filter input value whereas, if the sample is not valid, a padding value is taken as the filter input value, the padding value being derived from at least one valid sample.

3. A method of filtering as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the method comprises the steps of:

- forming a cluster of samples;

- calculating a padding value on the basis of valid samples in the cluster;

20 - forming a set of filter values by taking, for each valid sample, the value of that sample and by taking the padding value for each non-valid sample;

- deriving a filtered sample from the cluster of filter input values.

4. A filter arrangement (FAR) for filtering a collection of samples (S_i),

25 characterized in that the filter arrangement comprises:

- an input circuit for distinguishing between valid samples (S_i^+) and non-valid samples (S_i^-) on the basis of auxiliary data (AUX); and

- a filtering circuit for deriving filtered samples (S_o), which are associated with

5. A computer program product for a filter arrangement, the computer program product being characterized in that it comprises a set of instructions which, when loaded into the filter arrangement, causes the filter arrangement to carry out the method as claimed in claim 1.

ABSTRACT:

A collection of samples S_i , representing, for example, an image is filtered in the following manner. A distinction is made between valid samples S_{i+} and non-valid samples S_{i-} on the basis of auxiliary data AUX . Filtered samples S_o , which are associated with the valid samples S_{i+} , are derived exclusively on the basis of the valid samples S_{i+} .

- 5 Accordingly, it is prevented that the filtered samples, which are associated with the valid samples, are mixtures of valid and non-valid samples. Such mixtures cause distortion, in particular if the valid and non-valid samples substantially differ in value.

Fig. 1

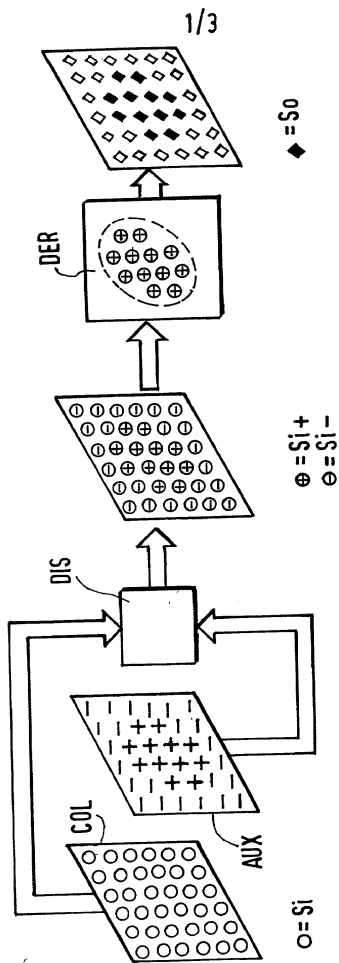


FIG.1

2/3

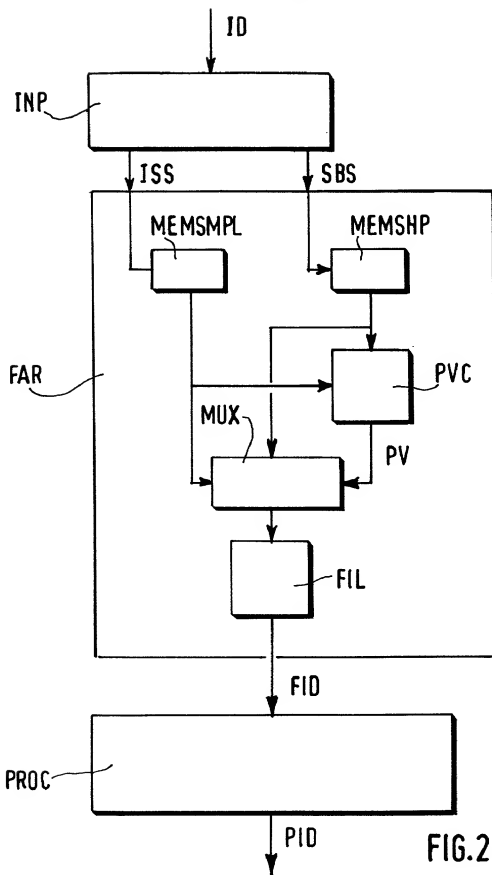


FIG.2

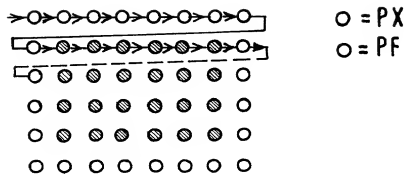


FIG. 3

DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NO.:
PHF 99.513

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

"Filtering a collection of samples"
the specification of which (check one)☐ is attached hereto.☐ was filed on _____ as Application Serial No. _____ and was amended on _____ (if

applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by the amendment(s) referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56(a).

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, § 119 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

PRIOR FOREIGN APPLICATION(S)

COUNTRY	APP. NUMBER	DATE OF FILING (DATE, MONTH, YEAR)	PRIORITY CLAIMED UNDER 35 U.S.C. 119
Europe	99400475.2	26 February 1999	YES

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, §120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35 United States Code, §112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose material information as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56(a) which occurred between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

PRIOR UNITED STATES APPLICATION(S)

APPLICATION SERIAL NUMBER	FILING DATE	STATUS (PATENTED, PENDING, ABANDONED)

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith. (list name and registration number)

Algy Tamoshunias, Reg. No. 27,677

Jack E. Haken, Reg. No. 26,902

SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO: Corporate Patent Counsel; U.S. Philips Corporation; 580 white Plains Road; Tarrytown, NY 10591	DIRECT TELEPHONE CALLS TO: (name and telephone No.) (914) 332-0222
--	--

Dated:		Inventor's Signature:	
Full Name of In Inventor	Last Name GOBERT	First Name Jean	Middle Name
Residence & Citizenship	City Maisons-Alfort	State of Foreign Country France	Country of Citizenship France
Post Office Address	Street 35, rue Fernet	City 94700 Maisons-Alfort	State of Country France
			Zip Code

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of

Atty. Docket

JEAN GOBERT

PHF 99,513

Serial No.

Group Art Unit

Filed: CONCURRENTLY

Ex.

FILTERING A COLLECTION OF SAMPLES
Honorable Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

APPOINTMENT OF ASSOCIATES

Sir:

The undersigned Attorney of Record hereby revokes all prior appointments (if any) of Associate Attorney(s) or Agent(s) in the above-captioned case and appoints:

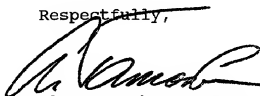
RUSSELL GROSS

(Registration No. 40,007)

c/o U.S. PHILIPS CORPORATION, Intellectual Property Department, 580 White Plains Road, Tarrytown, New York 10591, his Associate Attorney(s)/Agent(s) with all the usual powers to prosecute the above-identified application and any division or continuation thereof, to make alterations and amendments therein, and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith.

ALL CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING THIS APPLICATION AND THE LETTERS PATENT WHEN GRANTED SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE UNDERSIGNED ATTORNEY OF RECORD.

Respectfully,



Algy Tamoshunas, Reg. 27,677
Attorney of Record

Dated at Tarrytown, New York
this 10TH day of FEBRUARY, 2000.

00503937 021400
CONFIDENTIAL